

# Smoking Stages in an Iranian Adolescent Population

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**Abstract-** The aim of this study is determining the prevalence of smoking stages in adolescents of Tabriz city (northwest of Iran) and identifying the personal, environmental, and psychological factors relating to cigarette smoking. Fifty-seven high schools were randomly selected, and 4903 students were completed a self-administered questionnaire about cigarette smoking and the related risk factors. The association of independent variables with cigarette smoking was evaluated using the ordinal logistic regression model. In total, 17.3% of the participants were experimenters (95% CI: 15.8-18.9) and 5.0% were regular smokers (95% CI: 3.7-6.2). The results showed that the male gender (OR=2.92; CI: 1.94-4.77), age (OR=1.27; CI: 1.02-1.64), having general risk taking behavior (OR=1.50; CI: 1.02-2.21), presence of a cigarette smoker in the family (OR=1.78; CI: 1.23-2.54), friendship with close cigarette smoker friends (OR=2.52; CI: 1.65-3.86), substance abuse experience (OR=8.27; CI: 2.61-25.61), attitude toward cigarette smoking (OR=1.22; CI: 1.10-1.27) and positive thinking about cigarette smoking (OR=1.05; CI: 1.01-1.14) are associated to cigarette smoking in adolescents. The cigarette smoking prevalence is minimal in Tabriz city adolescents, especially in girls; but the experimenter prevalence is considerable. Findings of this study justifies adopting more serious measures in the pre-adolescence and adolescence period.

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## Introduction

Cigarette smoking is one of the most important public health problems, recognized as a significant preventable risk factor of premature deaths (1). One of the priorities of public health for decreasing the prevalence of the cigarette smoking is preventing the adolescents of becoming smokers. A good argument in favour of preventing the adolescents from cigarette smoking is that if smoking is not started in adolescence period, there is lower probability for an individual to become a cigarette smoker (2); on the other hand, the probability of quitting smoking in adults is inversely related to the beginning age of smoking (3). Also, non-recurring experience of cigarette smoking in adolescence considerably increases the risk of becoming a smoker in adult life (4). Hence, to decrease the prevalence of cigarette smoking, focusing preventive and control measures in this age group will be effective.

Different studies have shown that the beginning age of cigarette smoking both in developed and in developing countries is decreasing (5). Prevalence of cigarette smoking in adolescents of western countries is about 25%, but as it is shown, it has been decreasing since 1990s (6-8). In Iran, the prevalence of cigarette smoking among the adolescents has been reported about between 2.5 to 17% (9-15). Such a broad range is primarily due to the variety of the definition of "being a smoker", the age difference of the samples under study and the location where such studies have been undertaken.

Cigarette smoking in adolescents is a complicated behavior, connected with different environmental-social (cultural, familial, peers, etc.) and personal factors (1,2,9,10,16,17). Besides, some risk factors can produce various effects in different environments (18). Therefore, the factors relating to the cigarette smoking stages must be studied in each specific society, so that

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